532 538 The Chinese, especially the Chinese Communists, often speak of literature and the arts as one. In the Communists' policy statements, what pertains to literature also pertains to the other arts. Therefore, as far as the theory and policy of the arts are concerned, no separate treatment is necessary.

532 538 184 In less sophisticated folk literature and folk art, however, East China exhibits some unique regional characteristics. But even in this respect, the East-China Region is by no means an integrated whole: Shantung is more closely related to the North China tradition, and is oriented toward Hopei rather than toward the provinces in the south; Fukien has South China characteristics not shared by other provinces in the region. Furthermore, in the mountains of southern Chekiang and western Fukien there are minority groups who have forms of intellectual and artistic expressions unlike those of the Han Chinese.

I. GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF LITERARY ACTIVITIES IN COMMUNIST CHINA

• 814 The reform of literature and art (wen-i cheng-feng) at Yenan in 1942[1] made the practice

1. Mao Tse-tung's speeches at the Party School in Yenan in February and at the Yenan Literary and Art Circles' meeting in May 1942 established the "line" of literature and art endorsed by the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party which has since been upheld as the creed of writers and artists in Communist

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1. (continued) China. The general tenor of the speeches was that literary and art workers at Yenan, being undeniably "revolutionaries by choice," should cease the hitherto blind imitation of alien prototypes and the singing of abstract, contentless tunes which had nothing to do with the revolution and which could not possibly be understood by the peasant-worker-soldier masses. In their place, fresh and lively revolutionary themes in the Chinese style would be appreciated by the masses. Although in principle Mao believed that Chinese literature and art should benefit from masterpieces of other cultures, especially those produced in the Soviet, in no instance would he allow the separation of Chinese literature and art from immediate revolutionary tasks; and on this basis, he put the popularization of literature and art before its sophistication. See Mao Tse-tung, Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung, Peking Jen-min ch'u-pan she, 1953, Vol. 3, pp. 833-900.

A. The All-China Federation of Literary and Art Circles

814 In July 1949, before the establishment of the Central People's Government, writers and artists from various parts of China were "invited" to Peking where the All-China Federation of Literary and Art Circles was organized to co-ordinate the activities of a number of the nation-wide organizations in specific cultural fields, such as literature, art, music, and the cinema; it was to follow the line laid down by Mao Tse-tung in 1942. Theoretically, the federation is not a government body, but it sent delegates to the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference in September 1949, as did Communist-sponsored political factions and mass organizations. The chairman and vice-chairman of the federation were given posts in the Communist government.

814 538 At the organizational meeting in July, Chou En-lai told the gathered writers and artists that they were the representatives of 70,000 literary and art workers in China, of whom 30,000 were in the People's Liberation Army, another 30,000 were scattered in the old Liberated Areas, and the remaining 10,000 were in areas recently liberated from the Kuomintang. From Chou's statement it seems obvious that he identified as writers and artists Party propaganda personnel and those workers engaged in raising the standard of

814 538 literacy.[2] It is doubtful that the majority of these 70,000 so-called writers and artists had achieved high competence in intellectual and artistic expression. Two years later, the Communists' leading woman author, Ting Ling, was still complaining that as editor she had difficulty in finding passable manuscripts for her magazine.[3]

It is certain that the organization of these writers and artists put the politically dubious under the guidance and supervision of the politically reliable; and the organized state rendered the writers and artists collectively responsible and accountable for their part in the Communist cause. Furthermore, dominated as it was by veteran Communists, the organization embracing all China's well-known writers and artists served as an effective Communist-style "democratic front."

B. The Task of the Writers

The literary subdivision of the federation

2. Chou En-lai "Political Report at the Conference of the All-China Literary and Art Workers," (July 6, 1949), People's Literature, Peking, I, 3, January 1, 1950, p. 17.

3. Ting Miao, A General Analysis of Chinese Communist Literature and Art, Hongkong, Ya-chou ch'u-pan-she, 1954, pp. 149-150.

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814 538 was the All-China Association of Literary Workers, which, like the federation's other subdivisions, has its own professional magazine, People's Literature. In the first issue, published in October 1949, the sixfold task of the magazine was stated in part as follows:

1. To participate in the People's Liberation War and in the construction of the "New Democratic nation" through literary forms that are treasured by the people, with ideological content reflecting the growth of the new nation and praising the contribution of the masses in revolutionary struggles and productive activities;

2. To rid literature of imperialist influence, and to reform traditional literature; to accept what is good in foreign literary and artistic endeavor;

3. To guide the masses in factories, villages, and in the ranks in their literary study, and to help increase their "literary strength";

4. To develop literatures of the ethnic minorities;

5. To study revolutionary theory, and to organize groups for the study and discussion of the new literary productions and the formulations of a "scientific" theory of literary criticism;

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6. To promote interflow of literature and art among nations; to develop patriotism and internationalism; and to participate in the struggle for peace led by the USSR.[4]

Before the writers of the association had time to demonstrate their ability to implement these policies by fulfilling pledges to turn out so many pieces of work in a stipulated period of time, the conflict in Korea began.

The war was utilized by the Party as a schooling ground for class education and was depicted as a panorama of international class struggle. On this pretext writers were sent to the front to learn about "reality" in order to delineate the struggle of the "hero of the day" and to draw the "moral of his time." They were expected to make the most of their experience, not only by reporting immediate events but also by recording their impressions in notes to serve as material for more lengthy literary works. With the exception of Pa Chin's Living Among the Heroes, Wei Wei's Who Are The Most Lovable People?, Lu Chu-kuo's Shang-kan Mountain, Yang Shu's Three Thousand-

4. People's Literature, I, 1, October 25, 1949, p. 13. The content of this declaration reads very much like the constitution of the Union of the Soviet Writers in the USSR.

814 538 Li Territory, and a few others which are readable and maintain certain literary standards, most of the writings based upon the authors' experience in Korea do not show maturity even in the handling of the Chinese language. However the Chinese Communists claimed that these second-rate writings adequately expressed the Chinese Volunteers' patriotism and Communist internationalism. In this strategy the Communists departed from one of their most boasted practices. Throughout the war against Japan and the "war of liberation" against the Kuomintang, Chinese soldiers were encouraged to write, and writings from the ranks were lauded and widely publicized. But professional writers were sent to Korea, probably to assure a more skillful dramatization of the Communist cause.

However, the Korea front was not the only place where writers were to learn about "reality" and to dramatize the "cause of the people." While the war was going on, Ai Wu, Ts'ao Yü, the noted playwright, and other writers were sent to factories; Ho Ching-chih, author of the celebrated The White-haired Girl, was sent to study life in the villages; Ting Hsi-lin, Liu Ch'ing, Li Tzu-hua, Mu Yeh, and a host of other veteran motion picture producers and directors were sent to Shanghai to participate

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814 in the Three-Anti and Five-Anti campaigns.[5]

538 But these writers were not to record life as they observed it. Before they left for their "life schools," they had to undergo some "training." One can imagine the situation: writers of the calibre of Pa Chin and Ts'ao Yü learning from the speeches of Lu Ting-i and Ch'en Po-ta, the two propaganda chiefs of the regime, "how to describe people, how to abstract living reality and exercise care in collecting material, how to portray and praise, and above all, how to avoid making mistakes." It would appear that the Communists were so eager to prove the righteousness of their actions that they carefully arranged that "history" be recorded exactly in the way they wished it to seem.

Judging from the extent to which land reform turned the rural, social, and political order upside-down, the Three-Anti and Five-Anti campaigns destroyed the bourgeois stronghold in the national economy, and the way in which the war in Korea affected the national life, one might expect that those writers who had been given the opportunity to witness these

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5. See the chapter on Subersive Potentialities in this handbook for the content and impact of the Three-Anti and Five-Anti campaigns.

814 538 momentous events would accomplish literary feats of equal magnitude. On the contrary, one finds, with only rare exceptions, "formula" stories which have all the correct political ingredients demanded of them but which lack originality and any attempt at characterization. One story of land reform reads much like another, the only differences being the names given the heroes and some few idiosyncracies of the writers in the use of colloquial expressions and political jargon. Necessary adherence to a prescribed political formula has blighted creativeness.

C. Literary Criticism

Fear of originality in literature is the result of the influence of officially organized and directed literary criticism, which uses Communist literary theories to coërce. The disparity in regard for critical and creative writing has stunted the young Communist literature and precluded a normal growth.

814 538 536 Outstanding instances of the enervating effect of Communist criticism are the reviews of the play "The Song of the Red Flag" and the story "Old Worker Ku Fu-shan." The play, concerning shock-teams in a production drive, was initially praised by the Communists themselves; later, it was criticized because "it did not give a strong protrayal of the trade union and the Party." According to the critics, the

814 author should have used the play to strengthen
538 the prestige of the trade union among the worker-
audiences and to emphasize the "heroic"
536 qualities of the leading protagonist, a Communist cadre. The portrayal of the Party cadre P'eng Kang in the play was deemed incorrect, "for the Party's leadership is invariably collective, but in the play, P'eng seems to be quite alone." The play was thus rated "of low educational value." The author of "Old Worker Ku Fu-shan" was reprimanded because he "not only distorts the image of a model Party member but also completely ignores the function of Party training and leadership."

814 The classic example of Communist literary
546 and artistic criticism involves the 1951 Shanghai-produced film, "Wu Hsün Chuan," based on the life of a famous nineteenth century advocate of free education who lived in Shantung Province. Wu Hsün was born into a poor family and was thus deprived of formal education. In order to help children to attend school, he dedicated himself to hard work and frugal living; and by shrewd investment of his savings, he succeeded in accumulating funds for the education of the poor. Wu Hsün's contribution to Chinese education was never questioned until the Communist critics attacked the film. Wu's efforts, according to the Communist critics, only strengthened the feudal order and arrested the forces of progress; rather than serving as an "accomplice" of the Manchu ruling order, the

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814 critics said, Wu should have joined the revolutionary force, i.e., the Taiping revolu- 544 tionaries. Furthermore, Wu Hsün's means of accumulating wealth was indicative of his "subservience to the rich and of his exploitation of the poor."[6]

The evolution of criticism of the film "Wu Hsün Chuan" is illustrative of the nature of Communist literary and artistic criticism. Adverse opinions toward the film were not initiated by literary and art circles, but by the Central Committee of the Communist Party. In fact, the film was until then very enthusiastically received, even by many eminent Communists. On May 20, 1951, the Peking People's Daily, an organ of the Central Committee of the Party, published an editorial alluding to this state of affairs. "Some comrades say that they have already mastered Marxism, but when confronted with concrete issues, they completely lose their critical sense." The "Party Life" column in the same issue ordered all Communists to join in criticism of "Wu Hsün Chuan." On June 4, a directive of the Ministry of Education of the People's Government, published in the People's Daily, instructed all the educational personnel in the nation to discuss the film.

6. The most representative voice of this kind is Ai Ch'ing's article "Oppose the Slave Ideology of Wu Hsün" in People's Literature, Vol. 2, June 1, 1951, pp. 9-10.

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814 On August 4, a final and definitive verdict on
546 the film was delivered by Chou Yang, the Vice-minister of Cultural Affairs of the Communist government. He labeled the film as unrealistic art and a product of anti-historical and anti-popular ideology.[7] Party organs in all parts of China where "Wu Hsün Chuan" had been shown used the film as a target for ideological propaganda. The ideology of the film was also discussed at the third session of the first National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, which met from October 23 to November 1, 1951. Members of the All-China Federation of the Literary and Art Circles began to echo the view of the Central Committee of the Party and confessed that, while they had made definite progress in the past two years, nevertheless they had always fallen behind the development of Chinese society. This confession led the writers to "plunge" into study in an effort to "remold their idology and to sharpen their critical sense."

814 This conflict between critical and creative
538 forces also manifests itself in the bulk of the incongruous writings of the literary critics in Communist China. The critics has ready an abundance of clichés, jargon, and theories of

7. Current Background, Hong Kong, American Consulate General, No. 113, September 1, 1951.

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538 socialist realism, but they are clearly ill-digested and are used with little discrimination or literary skill. Quotations from Marx, Lenin, Stalin, Gorky, Zhadanov are frequent but are not integrated into the theme of the text. Even Communist critics have noted that many quotations from orthodox Marxist texts are either irrelevant or superfluous.[8] Excess of verbalism at the expense of content makes literary criticism irreconcilable with the alleged theory of its essentially didactic function. Much criticism is lukewarm and stereotyped, written by writers who are called upon by the Communists to undertake the task of attacking their fellow writers. In this case, what is criticized is invariably the "petty bourgeois standpoint." The exception to the rule is Mao Tse-tung himself, who, from his position of absolute authority, can write criticism which is non-imitative, forceful, and pointed, even by the standards of the free world. Top Communists, like Liu Shao-ch'i, for example, who seem to be more confident in translating Marxism into practice, do not quote from orthodox texts as often or use as many clichés as the lesser Communists.

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8. Shen Chu-chung, "The Popularization of Theoretical Criticism of Literature and Art," People's Literature, No. 9, July 1, 1950, pp. 27-28.

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538 Since 1949, Chinese Communist literature appears to have concentrated on a number of well-defined themes. It has been most concerned with the individual under the Communist system and the problems confronting him. These have included the social confusion of the "New Democratic" period, the doubts of the intellectuals the "criminal activities of the bourgeois merchants, and the lackey of the imperialists," the rise of the industrial hero, the struggle against the "enemy of the people," and the appearance of human types based on the newly created Communist "tradition." Even the "return to history" is oriented to the solution of certain present-day problems.[9] Patriotism,

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9. Writers are told to find evidence in history of the excellent qualities of the Chinese people, and to appreciate and to learn the beautiful styles in Chinese literary heritage. For instance, the poet Li Po (A.D. 701-762) who was an incorrigible individualist, can now be safely described as a "great patriot," for "Li Po could not have written such beautiful verses about the magnificent rivers and mountains of his fatherland had he not been very patriotic." His many lyric poems which sang praises of the bright moon are now intepreted to mean his longing for a "cleaner" world, and therefore indicate his personal integrity; his mild protests against the conditions of his time are now interpreted as signs of his progressive spirit. Wang Yao, Li Po, Shanghai, Jen-min ch'u-pan she, 1955. Ch'ü Yuan, the poet-statesman of

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9. (continued) the Kingdom of Ch'u in the Chan-kuo period (481-221 B.C.), is alluded to for his "patriotism and sympathy for the common people," Kuo Mo-jo, "A Brief Account on Ch'ü Yuan," People's Literature, No. 44, 1953. Emperors like Han Kao-tsu and T'ang T'ai-tsung, who increased the national territory and the prestige of the Chinese people, are now praised as heroic. This salvaging of historical characters and literature for Communist posterity could be a sign of a felt need. There are reports that since the Party came to the cities it has been neglecting to supply enough reading material for the people in the old Liberated Areas, and the people have gone back to the old novels. In order that these people may not be "poisoned" by the "feudalistic ideas" in the old novels, the reinterpretation of the characters in old novels according to dialectical materialism seems far more necessary than the writing of novels of comparable stature.

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538 aestheticism, and naturalism are all good literary themes, provided they are imbued with the spirit of "socialist realism," i.e., belief in the inevitability of the development of socialism.

Since 1949 China's best writers have not produced any first-rate work. If there happen to be interesting writings that suit the taste of the reader, they do not fit into the theoretical scheme of the Party. Hsiao Yen-mu's short story "Between Us, Husband and Wife," for instance, was criticized as "employing the intellectual's viewpoint and taste to distort the image of the working masses and to vulgarize things political."

Some writers are unable to find publishers for their work, not because the work is counter-revolutionary but because its theme is considered untimely. In 1952, Miao Yen-hsiu was advised not to publish his Miao-shan Feng-kuang, a long poem about freedom of love and marriage in Miao communities, because the Communists did not think a celebration of the equality of the sexes useful to the Communist revolution at that time.

Romantic novels of love and sophisticated novels of human relationships are not published. When love does come into the scene, it is shown as subsidiary to other, more "worthy" and "unselfish" problems (i.e., problems social and political).

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538 Although the writer may desire to let human relationships play a decisive part in the development of his material, there is a tendency to utilize abstract characters rather than vivid personalities. Most of the writers who choose to deal with the exposure of corruption and the excesses and tyranny of established institutions are more adept at protraying "negative" personalities than creating "positive" personalities in keeping with the Communists' view of the "heroes" of the new regime. This is true, despite the fact that Communist leaders have repeatedly told the writers "to give the most important position in the plot to the affirmative man," and that "in no case should evil be vivdly presented, lest virtue remain an abstraction," for it is now the writers' task to describe the bright possibilities of life under Communist leadership.

The recent development of literature and art in China seems to parallel that in Soviet Russia. In China, the emphasis to praise industrial and agricultural heores follows the pattern of Soviet literature. The influence of the war in Korea upon literature in China is comparable to the influence of World War II upon Russian literature. Now that we hear about the "thaw" in Russian literature,[10] can we

10. Walter Z. Laqueur, "Russia in Flux, I. The 'Thaw' and After," Encounter, London, October 1955, p. 35.

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538 anticipate a similar development in China? Hu Feng's attempt in early 1955[11] to liberate literature from the shackles of politics, though ended in failure and personal disgrace, indicates, nevertheless, conscious recognition by a group of writers of the freedom necessary for the creation of works of art.[12] Only general discussion of minor ways to improve literature, has been undertaken by leading authors like Mao Tun (Shen Yen-ping) and Ai Ch'ing, and all discussions are prefaced by fervent dedications to the Marxist-Leninist world outlook. While the parallel we draw of the development of literature in the two countries may aid in the understanding of certain similarities, the parallel is not complete. If we compare the contents of the first six issues of People's Literature (October 1949 to April 1950) with the six issues published in the first six months of 1955, we find a noticeable change: the percentage of creative writing by Chinese has increased, and the percentage of works translated from the Russian has decreased. Among the translated works, the percentage from Soviet Russia is smaller than it was, and there is now a sampling of literature from non-Communist sources, including, surprisingly enough, the tales of Hans Christian Andersen.

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11. Hu Feng is a well-known Communist writer, and was the protégé of the Communists' "liberary saint" Lu Hsün.

12. Laqueur, op. cit., p. 35.

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538 to the students than many of the characters in novels written by Chinese authors, most probably because the Chinese novels are poor imitations of Russian originals. Mayakovsky's poem "Lenin" is acclaimed by the Chinese Communists as a model of socialist realism, and Michael Prishvin's nature poetry is popular. Chinese translations of Ehrenburg's Storm and Nikolayava's Harvest are best-sellers.[15]

Since the establishment of the Central People's Government, delegations of Russian authors have visited Peking and other important cities of China. Russian is now taught in Chinese schools as the first foreign language. Under the Communist regime, the Sino-Soviet Friendship Association, with branches throughout China, has contributed much in the promotion of popular appreciation of Russian culture.

B. Academic Writings

• 814 Academic writings under direction of the Chinese Communists seems to be concentrated

15. "'Liberating' the Creative Impluse in China," The Time Literary Supplement, August 5, 1955, xlii. For the Chinese Communists' own estimation of the influence of Soviet literature on Chinese writing, see Pa Jen, Look at the Soviet People through Soviet Literature, Peking, Chung-kuo ch'ing-nien ch'u-pan she, 1955.

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814 upon the history of peasant rebellions during the last one hundred years, anthropological studies of the ethnic minorities in China, commentaries, political and philosophical, on texts by Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin, Mao Tse-tung, and Liu Shao-ch'i, and archeology and pre-historic Chinese society.

In the field of modern Chinese history, the Chinese Historical Society[16] is most comprehensive in its program of research. It has sponsored the compilation of a series of documents on modern Chinese history. To date, the published volumes of the series include Nien Chün, concerning the peasant rebellions in Kiangsu, Anhwei, Honan, and Shantung in the latter half of the nineteenth century; and the Hui Revolt, the revolt of the Hui people in the Northwest and in the Province of Yunnan in the Southwest in the nineteenth century, the Opium War (1839-1842), and the Hundred-Day Reform (1898). This series will include twelve collections of source materials including works on the Sino-Japanese War (1894-1995), and the May Fourth Movement (1919).

The published volumes contain a wealth

16. The society is now called the Institute of Chinese History, a division of the Academy of the Sciences at Peking.

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814 of source materials. In addition to assembling records kept by previous governments, the works bring together the memoirs of individuals concerned and documents which have lain undisturbed in county archives. However, one cannot find in these volumes any interpretation of or commentaries on the material gathered. In the prefaces to these published volumes it is stated that:

> "Counterrevolutionary forces always try their best to distort fact. Because they often suppress and destroy revolutionary literature, the latter is seldom preserved for posterity. Now research in past revolutionary events can only proceed from the records kept by the counterrevolutionaries. Therefore those who are going to use the material here assembled must be reminded that they should approach the matter with a viewpoint opposite to that advocated by the authors of the material."

So far no major historical treatises based on this material have been written. The first volume of Part I of Fan Wen-lan's Modern History of China (Harbin, Tung-pei shu-tien, 1948) which deals with the period 1840-1905, is the text on modern Chinese history; Fan's book was published before the Communists

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814 achieved national power. Other historicans such as Ku Chieh-kang, who at the beginning of the Communist rule in China expressed his gratitude to the Chinese Communist regime for enabling him to continue his research, have so far produced nothing.[17] Historians in China now prefer to annotate published works rather than write their own view of history, probably for fear that the whims of some Communist critics may some day put them in peril. As a result of the lack of new historical texts, history books written before 1949 are now being reprinted.

Of the academic people who have transferred their allegiance to the Communist regime, the anthropologists seem to be faring better than others. Fei Hsiao-t'ung, author of Peasant Life in China (London, 1939) and China's Gentry (Chicago, 1953), published his Revamping the Universities (Shanghai, Shanghai ch'u-pan kung-ssu, 1950), in which he anticipated the change of college curricula under the Communist government. Fei has since led several government delegations to visit the ethnic minorities in the South and Southwest and has made some first-hand studies of these peoples. In the field of anthropology much basic study is possible without running afoul of the Communist

17. The re-writing of history textbooks with a dialectic materialist viewpoint for primary and secondary school students is not considered in this section. See the chapter on Education in this handbook.

814 line. Despite the omnipresent praise for Communist policies, the articles written by anthropologists do indicate that new facts are being discovered; and the fact that these discoveries are financed by the government and are used in the administration of the minority peoples may suggest the favored position held by anthropologists in China today. On the other hand, anthropologists so busily employed by the government are prevented from doing the work they might undertake in a free society.

812 In the field of philosophy, especially political philosophy, Mao Tse-tung's books are accepted as of unquestioned authority. His Selected Works has gone through several editions since 1949, each new edition being more beautifully and elegantly printed than the one before, although somewhat changed to suit present political requirements. But Mao has not written any new books since 1949. Political theorists who wrote on socialism before 1949 now limit their writings to short ariticles published in such journals as The New Reconstruction (Hsin Chien-she), explaining Communist terms and government policies. Fung Yu-lan, the philosopher, has published "Mao Tse-tung's On Practice and Chinese Philosophy," since he made his confession. This article is an attempt to establish some continuity in Chinese